

Same Tata!

2 portraits

11 sec.

004- "I started with the portrait. When I look back, I think my
006. consuming interest was and is the portrait, strangely enough."

53 sec.

2 portraits

025 - 032.

"Even when I first showed in '47 in Bombay - a one man show - most of the photographs were portraits. They were all very academic you know, the dark background, the 45° Rembrandt lighting. All these preconceived notions, they were very artificial."

omit

[You know I just used one flood as I told you before and a reflector and I did mention that I worked with that. And I don't...]

"First there is the principle that there is only one sun. There are not half a dozen suns. So the light comes from one direction primarily and if it's too harsh a light, then you either use a second light to cut it, cut into the shadows or use a reflector."

22 sec.

4 portraits

036 - 040

omit

"Ya they were all salon type and I began almost in the German tradition of a part of the face - the eyes, the mouth, close-up. You know in the old days the German movies, there were all kinds of close-ups; they were terrific. And I guess that was some kind of sub-conscious influence there."

25 sec.

048 - 052.

K.T. "But those portraits in a sense are very different from the ones you are doing now."

4 portraits

S.T. Oh very very much different. "The one's I'm doing now were begun in '49. And there was still quote-unquote, a loyalty to the old methods. I'd go back to the bigger camera and take pictures and at the same time I'd use my Leica in available light."

65 sec.

6 portraits

126 - 139.

I have a recipe for the kind of portrait I'm doing now. "There are 3 steps to it. The first thing is that the sitter has to be in complete agreement with the photographer. That he or she wants to be photographed. That there's no resistance to the

idea. That makes it much more difficult. So once you have the subject agreeing, that's step 1. The second step evolves around the photographer. He should have enough, he should be sensible enough - in the meaning of the French word sensibilité or in the old english sense of the word which was sensibility. Now that the photographer has to have. And then there has to be a rapport, there has to be a tune. And then you have the portrait. It's as simple as that.

57 sec.

146 - 167.
circa 1956

portrait of Jan Mennis

* Jan Mennis whom I met in a gallery. He was introduced to me by Seymour Segal, the painter who had already talked about him. I was in the gallery + I said the Seymour, "this friend of yours, Mennis, is he still in town?" And he said "he is. He's sitting right there." So I turned to him + I said to him "Mr. Mennis, I'd like to photograph you." And he said "why?" I said "Well, you know, you have a reputation and all that." He said "well do come along." I talked to him for 20 min, 30 min. I forget. I had the camera there on the table + we talked. The funny thing, I said "I think you're ready." He said "Yes, I'm ready, let's go." You know we both felt we had come to a point of accord. We were in accordance. You know, that was it.

7 sec.

433 - 435.

K.T. What about when you can't find the person in their own home, in their own environment? How do you improvise?

52 sec.

454 - 465.

portrait of Frank

* S.T. Robert Frank on a visit here at Charlie Gagnon's home. And I took him one of my magazines and he said "Look, this is not my environment." And I said "It's a long walk to Mabou. And you're here + I'm here. Let's do the best we can." And I more or less isolated him. It's just a wall + a print - a scribble of a hand. Quite symbolic. But I didn't think of it at the time; I only saw it later on. I just saw it and I thought this is a nice little photograph in its relationship. But the geometry was right, you see. Koudelka on the floor of Cachier-Blessons living room. Well, when I'm there + they're there, what else can I do.

portrait of Koudelka

13sec

482 - 494.
portrait Callahan?

I think very often it's the people.
"Very often it's like a mirror. And you're the mirror image there reflected. If the mirror works O.K., then you get a good reflection."

25 sec

696 - 703.
4 shanghai

"But I think the best thing I have done as my sum total of my work is my Shanghai work. (Pause) And after that the portraits." "I think that is the significant, or what I think, the significant focal points in my photographic life."

25 sec

250 - 256

"K.T. Why do you choose to portray well known people?"

4 portraits.

S.T. Well, they're not really well known. Because I'm a photographer I'm drawn to people, always have been drawn to people who are creative." Or interpretive in the arts. Otherwise with my early training, I should be doing businessmen. If Time magazine sends me out to do a businessman, I'll do him, I'll do him quite well."

25 sec

279 - 285.

6 shanghai

"Don't forget that the Shanghai photographs were taken at a time of panic and turmoil because the population just didn't know what was going to happen. You know, with war you can always look on the dark side of things. As it turned out they had nothing to fear." Because the People's Liberation Army was exemplary in its behavior. So exemplary that the foreign correspondents kept sending reports abroad, you know, as to how stunned they were." But the whole object was to win the people over, not bat them on the head. Or destroy them, you know, they were their own people."

50 sec

289 - 299

6 shanghai

K.T. It must have been an incredible time to have been in China then.

S.T. Oh it was. Definitely." But again as I mentioned the other day, at the time, I was a person with a camera in my hands. I never left the house without a camera."

Exciting things were happening. "And I had met Carter-Bresson the year before, had seen his work and many things before. I was influenced by him and many other things combined.

omit [It seems like harking back to my 1st days in the streets. in 36' 37' before I went into this being an artist with a capital A, capital R, capital T. And ah...

17 sec.

554 - 559.

2 shanghai India

Jaipur mural

"Well I think of my work as sort of an eyewitness to whatever is happening around, whether it's important or not, it doesn't matter. "It can be a woman sewing with a machine, with the kids. Like that photograph of mine in Jaipur. With that magnificent mural.

18 sec.

→ 564

I guess that house must have belonged to someone of means, but somehow that mural is there. I guess somebody just kept putting fresh paint on it. It's beautiful. It's sort of a counterpoint to the very shabby little hole there.

16 sec

599 - 602

1 shanghai India
or elsewhere.

Again, reality is what fascinates me more than the things that are perhaps in one's own mind, or emotions that a lot of photographers try to express. I find that poets do it much better. And then the painters do it too. But the poets do it best of all. But then the photographers, I have reservations about; but then, you know that's my point of view.